



The Infant Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a product of Teachstone (teachstone.com). North Carolina has invested in strengthening capacity to use this observation tool more broadly and effectively to improve the quality of care in infant and toddler settings.

The CLASS tool emerged from a broad body of research and was developed at the University of Virginia as a way to measure proximal aspects of teacher-child interactions to better understand what quality is and how it affects learning and growth. Now that most child care programs provide safe places in their classrooms, CLASS shifts the focus from the what to the how of quality - how teachers interact with children, how they use time and materials to get the most out of every moment, and how they ensure that children are engaged and stimulated.

The CLASS measure:

- Is a structured observation measure. Essentially, observers make standardized judgments and attach those to a 1-7 Likert scale based on a careful review of the age-appropriate manual.
- Is a process tool. Research demonstrates that structure is mediated by process—that the “what’s” of quality teaching (structural features such as books, curricula, lesson plans) matter only through the “how’s” of quality teaching (how teachers use time and materials to get the most out of every moment).

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Infant Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Project

PARTNERS



Before they walk and talk, they interact. Interactions between caregivers and infants and toddlers matter—in a big way. These interactions lay the foundation for all subsequent development, making a focus on strengthening connections absolutely critical for improving child outcomes. -- Teachstone

Infant Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Project

Research shows that to impact teaching practices and improve child outcomes, you need to couple CLASS observations with professional development. One of the most important findings from CLASS-based research over the past decade is that teachers can improve their interactions with children.

The CLASS for Infants (birth to 18 months)

Includes a focus on how caregivers:

- Provide infants with a secure base for exploration
- Respond to their needs in sensitive ways
- Encourage early language development

The CLASS for Toddlers (15 to 36 months)

Includes a focus on how caregivers:

- Help children establish autonomy
- Support children as they make connections between things they learn
- Guide children as they learn to regulate their behavior

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- Was originally developed for use in pre-K classrooms, but has been expanded for use in classrooms from the infant to the secondary grade level.
- Provides a consistent approach to measuring teacher-student interactions during critical developmental periods, while still providing a context-specific and developmentally sensitive metric for each age group.

What did we accomplish?

This project expanded North Carolina's capacity for the use of the Infant and Toddler CLASS assessment tools, supporting staff to become certified affiliate trainers on the tools. This provides increased capacity to sustain the work that was begun through the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant beyond the grant period.

In addition, the cost associated with the Infant and Toddler Specialist renewal fees was supported statewide for those who completed the Toddler CLASS training, and were certified as observers in 2015 and needed to renew in 2016 in order to maintain their observer certification.

Lastly, additional Infant and Toddler Observer trainings were held, training a statewide cohort of technical assistance and professional development providers and observers to use CLASS as a context for quality improvement.

For more information on CLASS, go to <http://teachstone.com/>. For more information on professional development for the early childhood workforce in North Carolina, go to <http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/> ■